

SEC COMMENTS COLLECTION

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COMMENTERWORDS

As far as the public knows, the SEC is the last bastion between the will of NH citizens and the greed of mighty and greedy private and foreign companies. The approval process for this "Northern Pass Transmission Project", a non-reliability project, has been flawed at best, but the public is convinced that it has been rigged with buyouts from before it was announced. This comment is in hopes that the SEC will be able to sort out the valid issues with regard to siting this project (or refusing it altogether) based on the Truth, and not on flawed, misleading information, given by those who have a personal interest in the outcome.

First of all, thank you for serving on this SEC board. Maybe it's your job to do so, but this one is particularly hard because of the frustration and anger this project has created from the day it announced its assault on the North Country in Colebrook. I was there that day, and the Northern Pass officials were speechless when our Selectmen asked what was in it for the towns and people of NH. The NPT officials just shrugged and looked at each other. They continued to do that at every hearing thereafter for a year. They started paying locals to go "talk to" people whose land was in their "proposed ROW" (that never existed). Those folks bullied and played off neighbors and family members - they split families who are no longer talking even today. Those who caved in and sold out were ostracized even though many of us tried to overlook their "cashing in". Some moved far away. Others took the heat. One in Clarksville apparently took his own life shortly after he sold out - no-one knows why. This is NOT the fruit of a friendly energy project that is needed in NH or anywhere else.

As one whose property bordered the original proposed route, and as the founder of a small Farmer's Marketing Co-operative that depends on Tourism to help the farms survive, I have been opposed to the building of this project in any form. NH needs to build its Agricultural economy; it is not sustainable to build an economy based on payments to the public utility for the annual use of their Rights of Way (ROWs). The money to be gained for NH's economy for this project and all the others that want to come in after this one is established, will NEVER create a vibrant NH economy that feeds its people.

I understand that we need electricity, but with the rise of personal solar, wind, and micro-hydro projects, coupled with the "Live Free or Die" independence of the NH Yankee citizen, there will be no increased need for transmission lines - now or ever. However, the need to grow food and supply it to the citizens, especially the tourists who come to visit for the natural beauty (and the excellent local food that we are finally starting to provide) will always improve our local and state economies. Organized development of our state does NOT include towers or buried transmission lines. I hope that the SEC will seriously weigh the needs of our citizenry and our economy over the desires of a few shareholders who want to get rich by throwing around their money.

Since the energy needs of New England are decreasing, and if the gas line goes through, then the profits of this project will be severely curtailed, it will likely not even be profitable. The last thing we need is towers or even a buried extension cord that is obsolete before it starts making money. This should be thoroughly investigated before any approvals for permits are made. Once it's done, it is a permanent scar whether or not it is productive or profitable. We don't need a ghost town power line above or below ground.

Siting this project in Vermont, where it has been invited, and traveling in a more direct route to its destination, should be an option considered by the foreign company. Although I understand that this suggestion is likely beyond the scope of the SEC, it is a valid point, and Northeast Utilities and Eversource should be told that they probably do not have the best option for their "partner, Hydro Quebec". Dropping this project and focusing on a more reliable, less contentious project would benefit their bottom line better in the long run.

Since the first meeting, there has been consistent and continued opposition to the project. This project is about 8 years into the battle. That is a long time to "wear down" the public, but instead, the opposition has only gotten stronger and just as loud. (However, they have become more civilized, and have managed to police the rogues who were making threats. This should be counted to their credit.)

Please consider the Conflict of Interest for those supporting the project. The public that is opposed to this project does NOT get paid to attend these hearings or take time to do studies or write comments. In fact, it has cost us all a lot of money. We are being raked over the coals already, and the project managers could care less - as long as they keep getting paid. Many of the proponents HAVE been paid to show up in blue and make their comments (whether it is part of their salaried job, or they expect to get jobs or sell land). If the SEC looked historically at the DOE

proceedings, it would see that although there are more proponent for this project, there are three times more opponents to the project - especially for overhead lines with towers. The opposition has continually remained at about 75% or more opposed, to 25% or less, who support this project. And those who are for it, reveal quite publically and shamelessly that they want it for the money it will give (or has given) to them, personally. If an analysis was done, and all those with a conflict of interest were eliminated from the comments, I believe that the SEC would see about 2% proponents, and 90% against, and maybe 8% neutral. It would be worth doing a quick survey of the comments to check this out.

I propose to you that if this project had merit for NH, it would have gained a following of proponents over the years. But despite the increasing buyouts and promises of big money benefits, it has not gained support from the people of NH who stand to lose the most if it is built. The people have not been duped, and we hope that the SEC will also be able to see the Truth that this project will never be beneficial for NH.

Northern NH, which does NOT have overhead transmission lines, does not want them, nor need them. The Property values have plummeted and stayed depressed for the duration of this fight. Even if folks "got used to the lines" in 20 years, the property values will still be lower than if the land stayed pristine and untouched. The comments from Les Otten and other "tourism experts" are referring to areas that have already seen lots of development. Northern Coos has NOT seen that development, and even when the Balsams is built (if it is completed, which remains to be seen), the blight of those power lines WILL negatively impact our property values. And the Balsams will only bring a financial benefit to a very select area - not to the whole North Country and the rest of the state, where the power lines will ram their towers and lines through everyone's back yard.

The studies done "by the experts" are bogus, and are not comparing apples with apples. The pristine land that does not currently bear towers NOR a buried line (except along current ROW's), SHOULD not be forced to do so. There ARE no comps for the "Experts" to use for this type of land and value. Therefore, those studies presented are flawed and grossly understate the massive impact that the power lines or burial lines will have on the North Country especially. Please consider the studies done by the true experts - the active Real Estate Agents and appraisers of the North Country. There is so much clear evidence that just the threat of the NPT collapsed our real estate market, and has continued to suppress prices and sales. Please refer to the many Real Estate agents who have tried to keep their businesses going in the light of this project's threat. There was one study in particular, the Dannis study, that was excellent, and was thrown out by some back door politicking, and I hope that the SEC will resurrect that, and read between the lines of what was done to politically humiliate and intimidate the expert who did that study. Please do you due diligence and find out what happened with that situation.

The cost of partial burial vs. full burial continues to be overstated by the NPT. They seem to forget the cost of all these conversion stations - building them, maintaining them, and manning them. They have not presented a complete and thorough analysis of the figures for these conversion stations. Even though the cost of those stations is not a concern to the SEC, they are a concern for the siting, because they are unsightly, are in fragile environments where there has never been any development (and should not be). And the conversion stations in Pittsburg and Clarksville are there to send a buried cable under land that is completely NOT accessible for use to the NPT. It is illegal to pass through that land. Period. Just this one part of the "preferred route" should cause the whole route to be disqualified by the SEC. Please consider this legality (and authorization of land use) that has been completely scoffed at by the NPT. The SEC has the responsibility to ensure that the NPT does NOT site their project where they do NOT have authority to do so, and this one area on their "route" is not approvable because it is illegal for them to pass through it.

Regarding the future plans of power grid lines in NH and New England. There is a great need to conduct orderly development in this pristine land, or it will begin to look just like Connecticut, New Jersey, and the places in Canada, on the way to Niagra Falls. I ask the SEC to please take a long look at the plans for the electric grid to put in multiple lines over the next 20 years, and to look ahead at the plans of those companies to create a chaotic crisscross of towers and lines from public and private companies trampling on our property rights to life, liberty, and justice. Organized and well planned infrastructure for local energy distribution is needed, but it needs to be along established energy corridors that do not interfere with the livelihoods and property values of those who are in the swath of those lines. Transmission lines that do not serve the people have no right to impact those who will only be harmed by the presence of those lines. The only place where Northern NH needs a transmission line (A/C line) is in the Coos loop - and that is to service a local vendor - not a foreign company. As for power generation for lower New England, shouldn't they be siting a natural gas electric plant closer to their demand so they don't lose all that electricity in the long power lines? There is no reason that the power lines need to go from Northern Canada through NH to Connecticut. I ask the SEC to please consider this strongly.

Regarding the arbitrary groupings of people as intervenors: this is a travesty. Every person who qualified as an intervenor should have been given the chance to intervene. If this was a just process, that would be the case. I appeal to the SEC to ungroup the intervenors and allow them to each present their individual cases. I had also applied for intervenor status online, but apparently my email was lost on the website because I never got notified, and now have seen that my name is not on the list at all. I assume this is the case with others, so the SEC would do well

to allow every intervenor to state their case at this stage of the process. All the public and intervenors are asking for is equal consideration for our livelihoods and ability to live without being preyed upon by big business that wants what little we have (for their pure profit).

In your decision, please consider the thought-provoking concerns and issues that have been offered by the people who do NOT have anything to gain from this project. In fact, all those who have something to gain privately should be excluded from comments because of their conflict of interest in this proposed project. If those comments were excluded, then you would find that 98% of the public opposes this project above ground. There are still at least 30% of us who continue to oppose it completely for many reasons, but we have compromised by fighting for burial. Please consider this great compromise in your decision.